

**Remarks to the Annual Conference of the
Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP)
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Hilton New York and Towers
1335 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York
(As Delivered)**

Well with the spotlight on me and the lights down, I feel like I should start singing but that would not be good.

Good afternoon. Thank you, Sandra, for that generous introduction and for your incredible leadership of this organization. On behalf of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, I am delighted to be here this afternoon to help kick-off Vision 2021.

Today I'm joined by our three panelists that Sandra just introduced and I, too, want to add a welcome to our audience online and I want to add a welcome to our embassies around the world who have dialed in.

After we finish our speeches and brief remarks, we will basically be taking questions from the audience and then we'll also take questions from our Twitter feed.

I'm delighted to be here.

A good many of you probably make New Year's resolutions. I make them all the time. Like me, you've probably broken almost every single one of them. But there's one resolution that I made on January 1st, that I absolutely intend to keep: I want to break new ground in our people-to-people relationships around the world, and to look for new models of innovation and engage and I also want to reconnect with everyone in this room and other people who are part of APAP to basically join you and work with you in re-establishing our working relationship in cultural diplomacy and artistic exchange.

One thing that I think you may not know enough about is what the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs does and what I'd love to do is take a couple of seconds to show you a brief video of what we do. And then I'll have some brief remarks and then we'll continue on from there. So, just a very short video.

Cultural diplomacy is an essential element in America's foreign policy. It builds on Secretary Clinton's concept of "smart power," which utilizes a variety of means to achieve our 21st Century foreign policy goals. It is a concept that recognizes and emphasizes those aspects of our society that are literally attractive—that cause others to come forward and join us and partner with us. Nothing in "smart power" is "smarter" than cultural diplomacy: it bridges language barriers, opens lines of communication, and connects people to one another in a way that is both lasting and immediate.

As Secretary Clinton succinctly said in a recent CBS *Sunday Morning* interview, "For an American performer or group to come [to a country] gives people a chance to think about what might be. There are certainly times when music conveys American values better than a speech."

And she is so right. In the arts, there are no great or small nations, no superpowers and their satellites; no First, Second or Third World nations. There are simply human connections. Each of the world's cultural traditions has equal stature and each voice has a claim on our respect.

As with any society, it is impossible to understand America and Americans without knowing about our culture. For over 50 years, the State Department has enhanced our cultural diplomacy efforts by taking Americans abroad and by bringing international talent to our stages and to our communities.

But cultural diplomacy is not accomplished by governments alone. In fact, not even primarily by governments. Partnership with the private sector is key. The very essence of culture is rooted in people, their creativity and vibrancy, their understanding and entrepreneurship.

Through your work, all of you are cultural diplomats. Thanks to the interconnectivity of today's world, your work can impact a young person half a world away. More people than the grandest concert hall could ever hold are using your talent and your vision to imagine and map out their futures.

This is cultural diplomacy in action. Today, we all have a role to play and the State Department; in particular I look forward to partnering with you to strengthen our cultural diplomacy worldwide.

From my 13 years at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, I learned that artists are always trying to find new audiences. Now, I know something else: so is the State Department.

With 45 percent of the world's population under 25, we especially want to connect with these young global citizens and are adopting new and innovative technologies to do just that. While the State Department may be associated with, yes, telegrams and diplomatic notes – and we still do diplomatic notes – we are now blogging, Skyping, texting and tweeting. And, I'm one of the people who came kicking and screaming into this generation.

In fact, we are using Twitter today to create a global conversation. As Sandra mentioned, I encourage you to "tweet" the hash tag cultural diplomacy. Share your stories, your experiences and ideas. And, in a personal plug, while you're at it, stay connected with me and follow me @AnnatState. I am trying to disseminate a lot of information that is important to our community.

Additionally, we use a diverse portfolio of programs in the performing and visual arts to reach a host of new audiences. Let me share a few of them with you. Some of you may be familiar with these, but some of you may not.

In December, the Department and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, our partner, announced *DanceMotion USA*'s second season. Four contemporary American dance companies: the Trey McIntyre Project, the Sean Curran Company, the Jazz Tap Ensemble, and Rennie Harris Puremovement will travel to 14 countries and territories. Just for a second, stop and listen to where the dance ambassadors will go: China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, the Palestinian territories, Turkmenistan and Zimbabwe. Building off of the success of our first, inaugural season, we've added another component: an international dance company will visit the United States and share their artistry with American audiences. All five of these groups will

participate in performances, educational outreach activities, workshops, master classes, and arts management sessions.

Another successful program, *The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad* focuses on American roots music: country, blues, gospel, hip hop, jazz, zydeco – to name a few. ECA, with our partner Jazz at Lincoln Center, has sent 39 groups with 150 musicians to more than 100 countries in the last five years alone. On a recent tour to South East Asia, the Johnny Rodgers Band invited a traditional musical group as well as Cambodian performer Pou Klaing to perform with them. The rapper's rendition of "What a Wonderful World" absolutely rocked the audience. Auditions for the next Rhythm Road tour are being held in New Orleans and New York and we will announce a tour in the next few weeks.

smARTpower, our next new venture, will send 15 American visual artists abroad to create community-based projects. This is a new first for us. This program, implemented with the Bronx Museum of Art, encourages dialogue on the environment, education, health, women and girls' issues, and freedom of expression. *smARTpower* is literally the first time we have used visual arts on this scale.

There is another program I think you will find of particular interest. We are embarking on a new, exciting and unprecedented endeavor. Under the name of Center Stage, it represents a dramatic departure from our recent cultural programming. Historically, our cultural diplomacy efforts have focused on sending American artists abroad. In 2012, we will **bring** 10 international performing arts groups to the U.S for a month —quite possibly in your community. Today, I am pleased to announce that the countries that we have selected are Pakistan, Indonesia and Haiti.

Not only will this begin to turn our arts programs into true exchanges, but it is a significant shift in our focus. We have moved from a concert-based approach to cultural interaction focused on community engagement and outreach.

With the New England Foundation for the Arts as our partner, each tour will include public and school performances, lectures, demonstrations, classroom visits, workshops, master classes, and artist-to-artist exchanges.

I ask you to please attend tomorrow morning's special session with State Department and NEFA representatives to learn more about Center Stage and how you might participate and become involved.

All of these programs advance our cultural diplomacy and foreign policy goals.

- They create a foundation of trust with people around the world – especially with young and underserved audiences.
- They establish relationships that enduring, independent of governments and political movements.
- They demonstrate values that counter popular misconceptions of Americans.
- And they increase the capacity of Americans to understand and engage globally.

These objectives lay the foundation for our programs, but people-to-people exchanges will remain the centerpiece of our cultural diplomacy efforts.

One of our recent Rhythm Road band members I think said it best, and if you'll indulge me, I'd like to read you a quote he told us and then he sent it too.

“On the entry path to Ankgor Wat, we passed a group of musicians playing traditional music on traditional instruments. It all seemed normal to me, you know, the Cambodian version of street musicians. Upon closer view, I realized they were land mine victims from land mines left behind over the course of three decades of war. The fact that they were land mine victims wasn't as striking as the spirit of the music they played. One of our main messages to students who attend our Rhythm Road Master Classes is to never give up one's dream. These musicians are the living example of the power of the human spirit. Cambodia itself is proof of such a spirit.”

Cultural diplomacy allows us to take the diversity of our cultures, customs and communities across the globe, and leap over distance, over language, and over generations to share the human spirit and strike sparks of enduring understanding and insight.

We are all here today because of our passion for the arts and our commitment to shaping its future. When we envision the world 10 years from now – we should ask, “How are the arts connecting people to one another in ways that we may not be able to do otherwise?”

Artistic expression will always be central to who we are as humans. The arts will always offer an opportunity for personal connection and reflection. And artists will continue to inspire our global society—reminding us of where we have been and creating a path for where we are headed.

At the State Department, we are committed to creating a lasting legacy that honors the arts, uses them to create mutual understanding and respect, and fosters a new generation of artists to support an open dialogue between individuals and nations. I look forward to partnering with everyone in this room and everyone at APAP.

Thank you very much.

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